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TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU

SUBJECT: CHINESE ENGINEERS WAIT FOR THEIR MATERIALS; LACK OF WATER
AT NYALA SUPERCAMP SITE AN OBSTACLE TO EXPANSION

REFERENCE: (A) KHARTOUM 343

(B) KHARTOUM 251

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Egypt will accept deployment of its infantry battalion in the hopes that its second battalion might be accepted at a later date. UN contractors are refusing to transport Chinese prefabricated housing units to the Nyala super-camp because UN payment offered for transport is too low. This will cause a delay in the arrival of the second tranche of Chinese engineers. Chinese Defense Attaché said that sending large numbers of additional international troops to the Nyala super-camp will be problematic as there is no water, facilities or housing in the supercamp area. He observed that while logistical problems may eventually be solved, the Darfur peace process seems to be going in reverse. End summary.

EGYPTIANS LIKELY TO AGREE TO EL-FASHER DEPLOYMENT

¶2. (SBU) Egyptian emboff Tamer Azzam told poloff on March 27 that Egypt has offered two infantry battalions, but the UN has accepted only one. However, Egypt would very likely agree to relocate its one accepted infantry battalion, originally planned for Nyala, to North Darfur (the Force Commander would like to see it deployed in Umm Kadada and Shangil Tobiya, ideally) in hopes that its offer of the second battalion will be eventually accepted - and that this second battalion would be deployed to Nyala. The 100-troop advance team, now in Nyala, would be ready to move to El-Fasher when the UN makes its final decision.

¶3. (SBU) Azzam said that the engineering equipment for the 275-troop Egyptian engineering unit is en-route to El-Geneina and should arrive in the first week of April. If everything goes according to plan, when the engineering equipment arrives the engineers will begin their travel and arrive in the first week of May. However, Azzam said that currently there are no storage facilities for the engineering equipment in El-Geneina and expressed concern that when the equipment arrives, there will be no place to safely store equipment and protect it from the weather. He said that the UN has not been forthcoming in providing details to either his embassy or to the advance team on facilities in El-Geneina. Azzam said that he was uncertain about the UN arrangements to construct facilities and was under the impression that the U.S. was providing facilities. Poloff explained that the U.S. is no longer in the camp construction business, which ended with AMIS. [NOTE: The Egyptian MoD indicated to the UNAMID Force Commander that as a condition for relocating its infantry battalion to North vice South Darfur, this engineering company would have to go to North Darfur with it, per reftels. END NOTE]

¶4. (SBU) Azzam acknowledged that the UN's rejection of the second

battalion was based on Darfur rebel objections to the Egyptians but could not specify which rebel group [NOTE: All Darfur rebel groups, coupled with the IDPs, object to an Egyptian presence. Abdulwahid has been especially vocal in his opposition. END NOTE].

UN CONTRACTOR REFUSES TO TRANSPORT MATERIALS

¶ 15. (SBU) Chinese Defense Attaché Dong Jian Dong told poloff on March 26 that 143 Chinese engineers are waiting for 40 containers of prefabricated housing units that would enable them to build housing for rest of the 315-man engineering contingent. These containers have been cleared at Port Sudan, but the UN's local contractor is refusing to transport the containers, saying the negotiated price (approximately \$1000) is too low. Dong said that the Acting UN Chief of Integrated Support Services (CISS) told him that UNAMID in El-Fasher is unable to intervene as the UN in New York controls the contracting of services.

¶ 16. (SBU) Dong said that the planned March 31 arrival of the rest of the 315 engineers will be delayed until the arrival of the 40 containers. He said that his troops can install the units in a matter of hours and the troops can be flown in within days, but he noted that the last shipment of materials took six weeks to travel from Khartoum to Nyala. Dong expressed hope that if the containers arrive within a week, the troops could arrive by Mid-April and begin construction of the super-camp.

NYALA SUPERCAMP HAS NO WATER

¶ 17. (SBU) Apart from the container transport problem, Dong said there is also a lack of water (required for cement as well as consumption by the troops) to begin construction of the super-camp. He said that his troops conducted a geologic survey which revealed there is no

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water anywhere in the vicinity of the Nyala super-camp. He said that the entire Forward Operating Base (FOB), the Bangladeshi Formed Police Unit (FPU), and his troops are all using Nyala city water that is of a very poor quality. As a result of the water supply problem, Dong expressed doubt about the feasibility of adding additional international troops in Nyala by May 31.

¶ 18. (SBU) Dong said that adding any additional troops at Nyala would require an expansion of infrastructure at the super-camp. He said that the FOB has food facilities for 500 people and would be hard pressed to feed additional soldiers [NOTE: The sub-contractor which has provided food at the FOB, Amzar, officially closes up shop at all Sector locations on March 31. END NOTE]. He said that the FOB feeds the nearly 300 Bangladeshi and Chinese soldiers, the 200 troops composing the Nyala Headquarters and protection detail, and 100 early arrivals of the Egyptian infantry battalion.

CHINESE: THERE IS NO PEACE TO KEEP

¶ 19. (SBU) Dong said that while the military deployments are continuing, albeit slowly, he said that by comparison the political process is "going in reverse." "The military is here to keep the peace, but there is no peace to keep," he said. He observed that the rebel groups continue to splinter, with each one making their own set of demands, while the main rebel groups continue to retain influence. He complained that Abdulwahid al Nur was "safe in France, for reasons known only to the French," and continues to enjoy popular support even while he announces the opening of an office in Israel and meets with all five members of the Security Council in Geneva. Meanwhile, Dong noted that Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the only rebel group with a national agenda and a strong ideological motivation, has declared they will only negotiate one on one with the Khartoum government with mediation by Kofi Anan. Dong expressed the familiar official Chinese view that the political process requires increased pressure on the rebel groups to bring peace to Darfur.

¶ 10. (SBU) Comment: The Chinese Defense Attaché, whose troops were

the first non-Africans to deploy, seems to have accepted "inevitable" delays the UN logistical support. This faith in the seemingly overwhelmed UN may be dangerous for incoming troop-contributing countries (TCCs) who continue to believe that UNAMID will provide for them, when in fact the UN has told them that UN troops in Darfur are to be self-sustaining. Increased outreach in TCC capitals is necessary to drive home the need for self-sustainment, regardless of where troops are deployed within Darfur. With the March 31 cessation of several key support services, most notably that of food provision by Amzar, it is all the more critical that incoming elements be able to support themselves. It is not impossible that one could see the shameful spectacle of UN troops complaining about not being fed after March 31. It is important to add that, despite the well-deserved bad reputation of the Sudanese regime, most of these problems are due to the UN itself.

FERNANDEZ